

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, September 8, 2009

GOVERNOR BARBOUR APPOINTS LES RANGE TO LEAD MDES Agency veteran takes over as Tommye Dale Favre retires

Jackson, Mississippi – Governor Haley Barbour today announced the appointment of Les Range as executive director of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. Range, who has served as MDES's deputy executive director and chief operating officer since 2006, will replace Tommye Dale Favre, who is retiring at the end of September.

"Tommye Dale's tenure has been marked by tremendous improvements in the scope and structure of this important agency's operations, and I appreciate her dedicated service. Les has been on board since 2004 leading the agency's workforce and unemployment insurance programs. He is already very knowledgeable and will do an outstanding job in this new position," Governor Barbour said.

Favre was named by Governor Barbour in 2004 to head an agency formerly known as the Mississippi Employment Security Commission that was restructured as the Mississippi Department of Employment Security with legislative passage of the Workforce Development Act of 2004 in the first year of the Barbour Administration. It was a sweeping reorganization of the state's workforce training efforts that put the agency under the governor's supervision.

"In 2004 the Governor gave me two charges: to better align Mississippi's workforce system and to make the Mississippi Department of Employment Security a more progressive, customer focused agency. I hope I have done both. I have certainly enjoyed trying," Ms. Favre said.

In his duties as deputy executive director for the past three years, Range has focused on aligning the plans and operations of the state's workforce system, improving customer service, and developing new strategic alliances to leverage workforce training resources.

He holds a bachelors degree in English/Journalism from Northeastern University in Boston, and a masters of business administration from Delta State University.

"I appreciate the opportunity to lead this vital agency at a time when there's such a great need for our services and resources. I realize the urgency that comes with this assignment and I will continue our team's efforts to strategically focus on increasing employment for our citizens," Range said.

Range has management experience with state government agencies, regional and local economic and community development organizations, colleges and universities, and as a business owner.

As an administrator and member of the President's Cabinet at Tougaloo College, he was in charge of fundraising, development, alumni relations, special events, public relations and marketing.

He has worked as a consultant to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Mid-South Delta Initiative, and provided hands-on technical assistance in the areas of management, proposal writing, program planning, organizational capacity building, community action planning, leadership, team development, and regional networking.

As program leader for economic development and public policy for the Delta Partners Initiative at Delta State University, he managed programs aimed at building partnerships between groups, organizations, and individuals in the Mississippi Delta.

He is an accomplished writer and began his professional career as a newspaper reporter with The Christian Science Monitor in Boston. He served for a number of years as a regular contributing columnist to The Clarion-Ledger in Jackson. At the local level, he served as city planner and economic development director in the small, rural town of Mound Bayou, Mississippi. At the state level, he worked at the Mississippi Research and Development Center as special projects officer, manager for black economic development, and communications director.

#